

DNR MGBC Meeting Notes:

Attendance:

Kent Van Horn (WDNR), Jason Fleener (WDNR), Pete Engman (WDNR), Jim Holzwart (WDNR), Bill Hirt (WDNR), Ron Gatti (WDNR), Tyler Strelow (WDNR), Linda Olver (WDNR), Chip Lovell (USDA-APHIS), Steve Bertjens (NRCS), Don Kirby (WI Waterfowl Association), Brian Glenzinski (Ducks Unlimited), John Wetzel (WI Wildlife Federation), Jeff Nass (Hunters Rights Coalition), Al Shook (WI Conservation Congress), Taylor Finger (WDNR) (14 votes total)

Guest:

John Edelbute (WI Conservation Congress)

Not in Attendance:

Paul Samerdyke (WDNR), Brenda Kelly (WDNR), Kurt Waterstradt (US Fish and Wildlife Service - USFWS), Peter David (GLIFWC), Steve Bertjens (NRCS), Roger Hansen (Green Bay Duck Hunters), Joel Brice (Delta Waterfowl)

Waterfowl Stamp Project Updates

Jason provides updates on status of projects funded by waterfowl stamp that will need to be brought to the Wildlife Policy Team for approval to carry over into FY15, because they have been going on for at least two years.

- Bryan Woodbury – Wilderness North Pool 1 & 2 and S. Pool 6 Renovation
 - o Carry over requested because weather conditions were not conducive to complete renovations
- Bryan Woodbury – Osprey Flowage Renovation
 - o Nearly complete carry over requested because weather conditions were not conducive to complete renovations
- Marty Johnson – Restore wetland and associated grassland in Racine, Kenosha, Walworth and Waukesha counties
 - o Project in progress with scrapes done, waiting for weather to improve before bidding
- Kevin Morgan – Joel Marsh replace structures

MGBC had the opportunity to express any concerns or disapprove of carry over before the projects moved forward to the WPT.

MGBC expressed no concerns or objections over carry over projects.

Update on Mute Swan Removal

- Chip Lovell provides update on USDA – Wildlife Services Mute Swan Removal so far for 2014.
- Mute Swan removals for 2014 totals - 48
 - 39 in Door County in Green Bay
 - 7 in SE WI
 - 2 in Necedah
- Marty Johnson has oiled 8-10 nests
- There has been a significant decline in Mute Swan numbers in the SE WI and because of the harsh winter there appears to be large die offs in WI and Michigan
- Currently there is a pair of Mute Swans in Ashland at Prentice Park, because they are located within the park no action can be taken until they move out into the lake.
- Less than 200 Mutes in the Mid-winter Survey
- USDA – Wildlife Services is in the last of a 5 year funding plan from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, however it looks like they will be funded for another 5 years
- Kent – Michigan is taking initiative to lead control of mute swans at regional scale, currently MI has 14,000-18,000
- Kent – New York recently approved a Management Plan for Mute Swans

Mourning Dove Update

- Dove Season increased from 70-90 days in Eastern Unit – All states east of the Mississippi River and Louisiana.
- Change in WI from Sept 1- Nov 9 to Sept 1- Nov 29
- New harvest strategy – harvest log mailed to hunters (HIP) and banding data are key info sources
- Spring dove call count survey is cancelled
- Ontario had first dove season in fall of 2013
- In 2013, a national dove hunter survey was conducted, results to come later this year
- Population is currently increasing at a rate of 0.5%
- Increase of 20 days at the end of season will have a negligible impact on total harvest

No concerns from MGBC on extension of dove season by 20 days.

Updates on Wisconsin Conservation Congress questions

Congress question to increase hen mallard bag limit to 2

- Results from spring meetings: Passed (64 counties approving, 6 rejecting, 2 tied)

- On the WCC annual convention floor concerns over the declining hen mallard survival in Wisconsin were shared. Following the information a vote was taken and the question still passed but support decreased to 36 counties approving

Kent provides handout on status of hen mallards in WI

- Review current research on mallard harvest in WI indicates 70% mallard harvest in WI are WI raised mallards
- With initiation of 60 day hunting season, hen mallard survival has declined from 55% to 46% and breeding population growth has slowed and began declining.
- Kent plans on proposing to maintain the one hen mallard bag limit based on both biological and social data

MGBC is supportive of maintaining a one hen mallard bag limit

Tundra Swan hunt question

Results from spring meetings: Failed (22 counties approving, 48 rejecting, 2 tied)

It was noted that Department has developed a new webpage to provide information for public on differences in 3 swan species found in Wisconsin.

Natural Resource Board Combined Hunting Stamp question

Results from spring meetings: Passed (62 counties approving, 12 counties rejecting)

- This is a Legislative decision
- Concerns were raised that WCC Migratory committee has not provided input on it
- Concern that money will be taken from waterfowl for deer, patron license sales will take a hit.
- Member Suggestion - keep the waterfowl stamp and also have a \$5 habitat stamp

Early Teal Discussion

Kent provided background on past teal seasons in other states.

Blue-winged teal can sustain 2-9x current harvest levels according to current harvest review

USFWS supports 3 yr experimental season for WI, MI, MN and IA in 2014

USFWS requires states to monitor and assess hunter performance

Season offer will be 16 day, 6 bird/day bag but states can take less

Kent provides state and federal timeline and highlights public input opportunities taken

Kent opens floor for discussion on all aspects of early teal season

- Questions posed by committee
 - Jim H - Will MN have 3 years or will timeline be consistent with other states?
Answer – USFWS has not decided
 - Ron G - Are they going to pool the data between states?

- Answer – Evaluation will be state by state
- John W – Is there criteria for passing and failing?
Yes. A bit complicated. Main message to hunters – Don't shoot unless 100% certain it is a teal.
 - Jim H – Assumes we will take public input after the 3 year experiment?
We will evaluate the social aspects of this season in various ways
 - John W – Will this affect banding efforts? - Possibly

Vote on supporting an early teal season

| | | Vote |
|------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Kent Van Horn | CO, Co-chair | - |
| Jason Fleener | CO, Co-chair | Abstain |
| Pete Engman | ND | Yes |
| Jim Holzward | NED | Yes |
| Bill Hirt | WCD | No |
| Ron Gatti | SS | Yes |
| Tyler Strelow | LE | Yes |
| Linda Olver | CSL | Yes |
| Chip Lovell | USDA-APHIS | Abstain |
| Steve Bertjens | NRCS | Abstain |
| Don Kirby | WI Waterfowl Assoc | Abstain |
| Brian Glenzinski | Ducks Unlimited | Abstain |
| John Wetzel | WI Wildlife Federation | Yes |
| John Edelbute & | | Yes |
| Al Shook | Conservation Congress | |
| Jeff Nass | HRC | Yes |

Hand vote on timing of season

Proposed time Sept 1st – Sept 7th

- 9 Yes. Passed

Hand vote on bag limit

Proposed bag limit of 6 teal/day

- 10 Yes. Passed

Discussion on shooting hours

- Jeff N – Can we change shooting hours based on previous year's data? Yes
- Jim H – Can we close early in the day to reduce concern about mistaken identification and duck behavior disturbance by those opposed to the season? Yes

- John W – Wants the cleanest season now so we keep for the future (suggests 9am – 4 pm)
- Brian G – Concern over consistency with early goose season? Others states (IL, IN) have different shooting hours and it has not been a problem
- Don K – Person at GBDH spoke well and suggested closing shooting early in day to prevent issues with misidentification of species and won't influence reg. season
- Steve B – Should collect as much data as we can. be liberal with season
- Jason – Need to consider how shooting hours will influence wild ricers
- Al Shook – WCC passed a sunrise opener and close ½ hour before sunset
- Don K – Intrigued by the closing shooting hours early because it does a lot to address those that don't want season. Doesn't feel that we are limiting hunting opportunity because timing of season, few hunters will be out in marsh when 80 degrees.
- An early opening time would reduce conflict on areas where folks are harvesting wild rice because ricers can't harvest until after 10 am.
- We should provide some opportunity after school in the afternoon

Following a good discussion on the different advantages and ways to look at altered shooting hours, the committee attempted several votes with none bringing a consensus or a majority. Kent suggested that he take the ideas and concerns shared by the committee back to the Department leadership and develop a season proposal considering these comments. The committee agreed on that approach.

Kent provides preliminary results from 2013 Hunter Survey that will be useful for the committee later in the summer when we need to decide the regular waterfowl hunting seasons.